(b) and (c) The position of MTNL subscriber base as on 30th June, 2003 in comparison to other cellular operators in Delhi and Mumbai Circle is as follows :—

Name of Operator	Delhi	Mumbai
MTNL	125390	165451
Bharti Cellular	1068447	302703
Hutchison Essar	721396	769835
Idea Cellular	192909	Not operating
BPL Mobile	Not operating	648043

Increase in Cellular Phone users

2559. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the number of cellular phone users is growing in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The growth in the number of subscribers of Cellular Mobile Telephone service during the last six years in the country is given in the Statement enclosed. (*See* below)

(c) World-wide, increase in the number of new wireless/mobile phone users is higher than the number of new landline phone users. The same trend is visible in our country also. This is mainly because wireless/mobile phones provide the facility to a subscriber to be contacted at all times and all places, where the coverage of service is available.

Statement

Growth of Cellular Subscribers during last six years.

Subscribers as on	Metros	Circles	Total
1st April, 1997	3,25,967	12,698	3,38,665
1st April, 1998	5,51,757	3,30,559	8,82,316
1st April, 1999	5,19,543	6,80,035	11,99,578
1st April, 2000	7,95,931	10,88,380	18,84,311
1st April, 2001	13,62,592	22,14,503	35,77,095
1st April, 2002	25,67,757	38,63,763	64,31,520
1st April; 2003	44,39,524	82,48,113	1,26,87,637
1st July, 2003	51,12,047	1,00,36,749	1,51,48,796

Village public telephones

2560. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the number of village public telephones installed in the country upto the March, 2003, State-wise;

(b) whether a very high proportion of the installed VPTs remain non-functional;

(c) if so, percentage thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to run these VPTs satisfactority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) : (a) The number of Village Public Telephone installed upto the March 2003 State-wise is given in the Statement enclosed. (*See* below)

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) Every effort is made to keep the VPT in perfect order by following maintenance steps :